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Iowa Drug Courts Get Help to Meet Growing Need for Mental Health Services

DES MOINES – State officials today announced Iowa Drug Courts will get some needed help to close the gap between mental health care needs and services. It comes in the form of a three-year \$810,000 federal discretionary grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.

“We were successful in competing for this grant largely because of the positive record of Iowa’s Drug Courts and shared initiative by the Department of Corrections, the State’s judicial branch and the Governor’s Office of Drug Control Policy,” said Steve Lukan, Director of the Office of Drug Control Policy. “Iowa Drug Courts have proven to be sound investments of taxpayers’ money, protecting the public while rehabilitating drug offenders with an addiction. We believe similar success can be found for those who suffer from mental health problems, keeping Iowans safe while simultaneously increasing access to care.”

Nine Drug Courts, serving three-fourths of Iowa’s eight judicial districts, will receive grant funds to enhance mental health services. Approximately 27% of the offenders served by the drug courts are in need of mental health treatment.

“We are very excited about receiving this grant assistance,” said Iowa Corrections Director John Baldwin. “Over the course of the grant, we anticipate that about 318 offenders with a co-occurring chemical dependency and mental illness will receive much needed treatment services that will help make our communities safer, and allow these offenders to become productive, law-abiding citizens.”

Iowa’s Drug and Mental Health Services project will benefit Drug Courts in the following counties: Black Hawk, Dubuque, Pottawattamie; Linn, Johnson, Scott, Des Moines, and Wapello. The project is expected to begin soon after the first of the year.

The grant is administered at the federal level by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance. It will be administered in Iowa by the Governor’s Office of Drug Control Policy.

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